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RECENT EDUCATIONAL DISCUSSION

EXTRACTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT OF PRESIDENT SCHURMAN
OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY

"A Board of Trustees is the legal corporation constituting an American university. Theoretically it wields all the powers of the institution. In practice, however, there had grown up another body of coordinate standing which shares these powers with the Trustees. I mean, of course, the Faculty, which in all reputable universities has control of educational affairs. This distribution of functions is now well established at Cornell University.

"The function of the Board of Trustees in a well-ordered university is to manage its business affairs. This includes responsibility for receipts and expenditures of moneys, the investment of funds, care of the building and grounds, and the operation and upkeep of the physical plant. On the nomination of the President, the Trustees also appoint the members of the instructing staff, and on the recommendation of the President they fix and from time to time vary their salaries. They also vote the annual budget which the Finance Committee recommends and which the President initially prepares. If the Board of Trustees undertook to act independently on educational matters or on professorial appointments and promotions they would invade the province of the Faculty and of the President and introduce chaos into the entire system. This division of power and functions, however, obvious as it is, has to be learned and generally by bitter experience, in most new institutions. The troubles and scandals which have from time to time arisen in American colleges and universities have been due generally to failure to recognize this fundamental principle of university government and administration. It has been a matter of gratification and pride to me that it has been so thoroughly observed at Cornell University for the last quarter of a century. And it has been one of the most potent factors in creating a salubrious and attractive university atmosphere.

"But this does not exhaust the duties of the Board of Trustees. They must also provide means of growth and improvement and if possible for the expansion of the university. It is not enough

that they should invest wisely the funds they find in the university treasury; they must augment those funds. This is a function of the Board of Trustees, which, while always vaguely recognized, has not, generally speaking, been definitely organized in American universities. In the colleges and universities with denominational connections it has been customary for the Presidents, who were generally clergymen, to undertake the task of raising money, which they accomplished by appeals to their natural constituencies, namely, the members of the religious denominations interested in their respective institutions. In the largest and best American universities, however, which are also undenominational, the task of raising funds is no part of the President's duties (though he may sometimes actively exert himself in the matter), and in recent years the work of raising additional endowments for these institutions has been systematically undertaken by the Trustees generally in conjunction with the alumni. The Cornell Semi-Centennial Endowment Committee is a happy example of such an organization. In some form or other it is likely to remain a permanent organ of the Board. The chairman or other representative of that committee would be in effect the collector-general of university funds.

"The establishment and consolidation of this new organ to collect funds for the university would round out and complete the organization of the Board of Trustees. That organization is already in all other respects an admirable one. The membership of the Board of Trustees being large, that body is in effect a Board of Overseers. It delegates the larger part of its functions to three standing committees: The Finance Committee, the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and the Committee on General Administration. The first of these committees has charge of the investment of funds, the second has charge of the physical plant of the university, and the third is clothed with the powers of an executive committee and between meetings of the Board of Trustees represents it in all matters not specifically assigned to the other committees. It will be seen, therefore, that this organization provides effectively for the conduct of all university business with the single exception of the raising of funds.

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"As I have so often said, therefore, it is the Faculty that makes the university. Of the two functions of the professor, if investi-

gation is the rarest, teaching is the most imperative. The art of the teacher, however, is a high one, for it is the stimulation of one mind by another. The master of that art is an invaluable member of any faculty. He deserves the same recognition and reward as the scientific investigator or the literary scholar even though he may not be himself one or the other. For colleges and universities as long as they exist must instruct students, and without a good teacher this service cannot be effectively rendered. In a true Faculty there is one spirit but diversity of gifts. One professor excels as an investigator; another excels as a teacher; another has a fair record for both as a teacher and an investigator. All are valuable; all are needed; all contribute to the life and activity of the institution. Two varieties only must be excluded. There is no place in the Faculty for the poor teacher who fails in investigation or the incapable investigator who cannot teach.

"There has never been a time when it was so difficult to secure first-class men, and especially young men, to fill university positions. I do not think there is any lack of idealism in the rising generation, but young men of superior parts who are interested in education and might respond to the appeal of science and scholarship are deterred from entering the profession by aversion to the drudgery of teaching mediocre students and by lack of time and opportunity offered for independent scholarship or scientific research. There is also the competition of other professions, and especially, in these days, of business, in which the universities are at a great financial disadvantage.

"One obvious remedy is to improve the salaries of university professors and instructors. This indeed I consider indispensable. And along with this economic improvement it is also essential that the social status of the professor be protected. But these attractions alone will not be sufficient to induce the ablest young men of the country to become university professors. For that result there is something vastly more important than money or social recognition. In the first place, the work of teaching itself must be made more inspiring. The professor must be permitted to become something more than a drill-master and pedagogue. This ideal must be measurably realized by the exclusion of the considerable body of indifferent and intellectually torpid students who now frequent American universities. Of that I shall have something to say in a later section.

"But many of the ablest and most intellectual men in the country would not be attracted to the faculties of our universities by teaching alone. They are primarily interested in creative work. The way to secure such men is to give them opportunities for research and scholarship. They are ready to do a certain amount of teaching but they are unwilling to exhaust their energies in the instruction of students. Many of them feel too that it is more important in the interests of civilization to enlarge the boundaries of existing knowledge than merely to communicate to one generation after another the stock already discovered and extant.

"I believe the American public want the best universities in the world and are ready to furnish the means necessary for their support. But the public need to be instructed as to what the university essentially stands for in American life and civilization. It must be demonstrated to them that unless we make and keep our universities genuine laboratories of creative intellectual work they will sink to the level of pedagogical institutes. The most hopeful way to recruit and reinvigorate the faculties of American universities is to make them places for able, well-trained, and intellectually alert professors, generally, of course, with the primary function of teaching, but also with adequate provision for creative work on the part of all who are ambitious and competent to undertake it.

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"While a high salary will not draw or keep the right kind of man in the teaching profession, relief from pecuniary care is necessary to leave his mind free for good teaching and effective research. The right kind of teacher is an idealist, he gives little or no thought to making money; it is all the more important, therefore, that he should enjoy exemption from anxieties regarding a livelihood or the coming of old age, so far at least as that can be affected by the assurance of a reasonable salary and retiring allowance.

"After favorable conditions for his work what the professor most values is liberty of thought, speech, and publication. It is no self-gratulatory assurance but the sober testimony of the sisterhood of American universities that in this regard Cornell University has been peculiarly attractive to professors. Speaking

for a period of nearly thirty years, I know that they have greatly appreciated the unlimited freedom which this university has afforded them, and that for the enjoyment of that freedom they have in many cases made large pecuniary sacrifices. The university has had no finer and nobler assets, to say nothing of its value as a marketable commodity. It is a glory which I trust may remain a perpetual possession.

"In recent years also the professorate has been admitted to representation on the Board of Trustees. But the Faculty representatives, while enjoying all the privileges of other Trustees, have hitherto not had the right to vote. This discrimination may be corrected either by an amendment of the charter of the university or by a self-denying ordinance on the part of the Board, agreeing to elect Faculty representatives as Trustees in the annually occurring vacancies which the Board itself fills by cooptation. I think the Faculty will not be permanently contented unless its representatives enjoy all the rights and privileges of other Trustees. If that consummation is not realized in the near future it seems to me probable that the professors, who undoubtedly desire to retain the newly granted privilege of co-operation with the Trustees in the government of the university, may suggest another form in which that policy shall be carried out and perhaps recommend the substitution of an organization of conference committees in which Faculty members and Trustees could come together on absolutely equal terms."

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ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES.—The Association has just published an index of Proceedings and Addresses of the First Twenty Conferences from 1900 to 1918. This is an important collection of papers and discussions on a very wide range of matters of university administration.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE.—The United States Bureau of Education Bulletin, No. 7, 1920, discusses at length requirements for the bachelor's degree in more than one hundred colleges and universities, selected with a view to representing variety of types—state and private. After a historical sketch, Chapter II deals with entrance requirements; III, with requirements for the cultural degrees in colleges of liberal arts;